Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 008328
ORIGIN NEA-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

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DRAFTED BY:NEA:AFN:JKBISHOP
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T STATE 008328

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM TUNIS DATED DECEMBER 23, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T TUNIS 9120

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, TS
SUBJ: COMSIXTHFLT INVITED USE MENZEL-BOURGUIBA

REF: STATE 295497

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN REFTEL I SAW FOREIGN MINISTER HABIB CHATTY DECEMBER 22 AND INFORMED HIM THAT THE USG HAD GIVEN LENGTHY CONSIDERATION TO THE GOT'S OFFER OF SHIP REPAIR FACILITIES AT MENZEL-BOURGUIBA BUT HAS DETERMINED THAT THERE IS NO PRESENT SIXTH FLEET REQUIREMENT FOR THE USE OF THOSE FACILITIES. I EXPRESSED OUR THANKS FOR THE COURTESY AND COOPERATION OF THE GOT IN ENABLING US NAVY OFFICIALS TO SURVEY THE FACILITIES THOROUGHLY, BUT NO FURTHER VISITS BY SURVEY TEAM WOULD BE SCHEDULED AND NO SHIPS WERE TO BE PROGRAMMED FOR REPAIRS.

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2. I TOLD CHATTY THAT I HAD ALSO BEEN INSTRUCTED TO EXPRESS AGAIN WASHINGTON'S UNHAPPINESS OVER THE INCREASED OPERATIONAL CAPACITY THAT USE OF MENZEL-BOURGUIBA WAS AFFORDING THE SOVIET FLEET. INDEED, I ADDED, CONCERN OVER THE GOT'S OFFER TO THE SOVIETS HAD RECENTLY BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SERIOUS DISCUSSION IN THE HIGHEST NATO

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QUARTERS. WHEN CHATTY QUESTIONED ME AS TO WHEN SUCH DISCUSSIONS HAD OCCURRED I TOLD HIM THAT TO MY RECOLLECTION IT TOOK PLACE IN LATE OCTOBER/EARLY NOVEMBER, IN THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE USUAL FALL MEETING OF THE NATO FOREIGN MINISTERS.

3. CHATTY ASKED WHETHER WASHINGTON IN MY INSTRUCTIONS HAD MADE ANY COMMENT REGARDING TUNISIA'S PRIOR EXOLANATIO, THAT ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS ALONE HAD LED THE GOT INTO THE SHIP REPAIR ARRANGEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD HAD NO WASHINGTON COMMENT REGARDING THIS POINT, BUT ASSURED HIM THAT THE GOT'S EXPLANATION OF ITS RATIONALE HAD ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED SEVERAL TIMES WITH WASHINGTON.

4. FINALLY, I REITERATED THE CONCERN OF THE GOT'S MANY FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON OVER THE POSSIBILITY THAT TUNISIA'S IMAGE RISKED BEING TARNISHED IN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO WOULD INTERPRET IT AS A SLIGHT SHIFT IN THE GOT'S POLICY ORIENTATION. CHATTY HAD NOSFURTHER COMMENT AND THE DIS-CUSSION WAS ENDED ON THIS NOTE.
MULCAHY UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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